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CYPRUS LOCUSTS.

BY A DWELLER IN THE EAST.

EVERYBODY who has read anything about the East must be acquainted with the plague of locusts. I distinctly remember that when a small boy I was more impressed by the accounts of the enormous extent of their flocks than with anything else my books could tell me. There was to me something appalling, and at the same time attractive, in the swarms stretching for miles, which obscured the sun, and devoured everything green wherever they settled. It is difficult, if not impossible, for any one brought up in our temperate regions to realise such a state of things. We hear, to be sure, of damage done to crops at home; just now, it is sparrows; not very long since it was game; next year it may be something else; but in all these cases it is simply damage—perhaps one per cent., or five per cent., or ten per cent. But with locusts it means not damage, but destruction, or, better still, annihilation of the crop. Fancy an English farmer turning out after breakfast and admiring his six-acre field of wheat, deliciously green, about two feet high. Fancy him, too, coming home to dinner at noon and seeing this same field as bare as his hand. This is no exaggeration, but a plain matter-of-fact illustration of what may be seen any spring where these abominable insects abound. Once seen, it can never be forgotten.

I have had my recollection of these creatures and their ways revived by a parliamentary paper entitled, 'Report of the Locust Campaign of 1884, by Mr S. Brown, Government Engineer, Cyprus.' It gives the results of the measures employed to stay the plague to which the island has for ages been subject; and so far it is satisfactory enough. The locusts have been put down, and for most people that is the chief point. I notice that the *Times* has devoted about half a column to the paper, but has contented itself with simply copying the salient points, the writer evidently knowing nothing of the subject. The paper

itself presupposes a knowledge of a certain nature, which no one except those who are acquainted with the district can be expected to possess. I venture, therefore, to supply the information necessary to a thorough understanding of the subject.

Speaking as a dweller in the East, I may say that we have had the locusts with us always. In the old old days, they were sent by the gods; in less remote times, they were a dispensation of Providence. They came and went, leaving lamentable traces of their progress. But it was in the nature of things that it should be so, and nobody ever thought of trying if something could not be done to stop their ravages. Under Turkish rule, of course this feeling was intensified by the fatalism peculiar to their faith. The locusts came of their own accord, and went off in the same way; it was *kismet*, and there was nothing to be done. But even Mohammedans in time cannot escape altogether the influence of Western ideas, and some thirty years ago it occurred to Osman Pasha, then governor of Cyprus, to try and make head against the scourge which devastated the island. He was earnest in the cause, but unfortunately died before measures could possibly have had any effect. His successors, as a rule, talked a great deal, but, after the manner of their race, did nothing. A tax was imposed on the peasants, which was to be devoted to the purchase and destruction of locusts' eggs. This was all very well; but as the officials helped themselves to from fifty to ninety per cent. of the money collected, very little impression was made on the swarms. And then, again, as three parts sand and one part eggs did duty as eggs, it is not to be wondered at that the insects were as plentiful as ever.

So things went on till about fifteen years ago, when Said Pasha became governor. He kept on the system of buying eggs, but with this important difference, that when he paid for eggs he saw that he got them. He put some Europeans on the Commission of superintendence, had the eggs stored, and authorised their

destruction only after his personal inspection. The proceedings were open to the light of day, and everything was done to prevent imposition. The result was admirable; in three years, locusts' eggs were as valuable as those of the silkworm; and in 1870, it was officially reported that the insect had ceased to exist in Cyprus. This, however, proved to be an exaggeration. No doubt, a great impression had been made; swarms were no longer to be met with by the ordinary traveller; but it is plain that a good many did remain in out-of-the-way and difficult districts.

In 1872 it was reported that locusts were reappearing. This was pronounced to be a calumny, and the observers were referred to the official Report, showing that the locust had ceased to exist in Cyprus—which, of course, was conclusive! In 1875, however, denial was no longer possible; no one with eyes in his head could doubt the existence of countless myriads of plundering insects. Said Pasha by this time had left the island, and his successor was of a different character, and did nothing to stop their increase, which accordingly went on unchecked till the British occupation in 1878. As may be imagined, the question very soon engaged the attention of the authorities, and a determined set was made against the creatures. In the autumn of 1879, thirty-seven and a half tons of eggs were collected and destroyed, and in the spring of that year an enormous number of insects were trapped. In 1880 larger swarms than ever appeared, a great many of which were trapped, and two hundred and thirty-six tons of their eggs collected. In 1881 the locusts came in still greater numbers, and in the autumn and winter, thirteen hundred and thirty tons of eggs were destroyed. It was evident that what had been done was a trifle; exceptional measures were declared to be necessary, and preparations were accordingly made on a very large scale for the campaign of 1882. It was shown that egg-collecting alone was not to be depended upon. One may think that this affords the easiest means of destruction, and so it does, if you can be sure of getting at all the eggs. But the breeding-grounds are situated in remote and rugged districts, to patrol which properly means a very large supply of labour, and even then it becomes a mere question of eyesight, which often fails. Up to a certain stage in its existence the insect creeps but cannot fly, and it is then that it must be taken. Trapping the non-flying insects is therefore the feature which forms the salient matter of Mr Brown's Report, but which will not be understood by the public without explanation.

The Report opens with a statement of the material employed. This consisted of two thousand canvas screens, each fifty yards long; one hundred thousand five hundred square yards of canvas for screens; twelve thousand six hundred and eleven square yards oilcloth; twenty tons zinc for traps; and seventy-six thousand one hundred and eighty-three stakes for the screens, besides cordage and other minor articles. As the reports from the breeding districts came in, it was thought this supply would prove insufficient, and Mr Brown therefore caused one thousand additional screens to be made up, and three thousand seven hundred and eighty traps of a new type to be cut out of the zinc received from England. The

total apparatus, therefore, when operations began, amounted to eleven thousand and eighty-three screens, each fifty yards long; and thirteen thousand and eight traps; with the necessary complement of stakes, tools, and tents for labourers. To give an idea of the total length of the screens, it may be mentioned, that if stretched continuously they would form a line three hundred and fifteen miles long, almost enough to encircle the whole island. In order to work all this material, labour was necessary, and accordingly contracts were made to a maximum of thirteen hundred and ninety-eight labourers.

This is all very interesting; but what is the meaning of it? What are screens? What is canvas wanted for? What do they do with oilcloth? And what sort of traps do they make out of zinc? This is what Mr Brown does not tell us, and this is exactly the information which I propose to supply. The first step in the process is to begin with a little natural history.

The female locust is provided with a sort of sword-like appendage, with which she makes a hole in the ground, in which she deposits her eggs. Over these she exudes a glutinous matter, which hardens by exposure, in time forming a case impervious to wet, cold, or even fire, the whole resembling a small silk cocoon. The number of eggs in each of these is variously estimated; some say a hundred, others eighty; but Mr Brown by actual experiment finds that the average may be taken at thirty-two, and that the sexes are produced in about equal proportion. It is not difficult, therefore, to calculate the rate of increase, allowing fifty per cent. to be lost through the operation of natural causes, birds, caterpillars, &c. A couple of locusts will thus produce sixteen individuals or eight couples the first year; next year, the product will be a hundred and twenty-eight, or sixty-four couples; the third year, eight times that; and so on—a calculation which may be carried on to any length you like, and which will explain the countless myriads which everybody has heard of.

The female having performed her duty in reproducing her species, is of no further use, and both she and her partner disappear—that is to say, they both die. It is a popular belief in Cyprus that the male eats the female and dies of the consequent indigestion. But a more scientific explanation of the fact is, that as by the end of July—beyond which locusts are never seen—everything green is burnt up by the sun, their food fails, and they die of starvation. There is no mistake about their death; every open pool of water is full of them, and the stench is abominable, and one may walk along the coast for miles amongst their dead bodies, washed up by the sea. The eggs remain in the ground till hatched by the warmth of the spring sun, which brings them out early in March. If the season should be cold or wet, the only effect is to delay the hatching; the eggs never appear to get addled. At the beginning of April this year the swarms were on the march, and operations began, and were continued till the 13th of May, when all that were left were on the wing. It is by taking advantage of the habits of the creature that the greatest success in its destruction is achieved. The young locusts as soon as they can crawl go in search of green food. Impelled by this

instinct, they go straight on, turning neither to the right nor to the left. They are remarkably short of sense; they can do nothing but follow their nose, and have not an idea of turning a corner. If a locust on the march were to meet with a lamp-post, he would never think of going round it, but would climb up to the top and come down on the other side. It is by taking advantage of this steady plodding perseverance that the arch-inventor Man makes the creature work its own destruction. Some twenty years ago, Mr Richard Mattei, an Italian gentleman, and large landed proprietor in Cyprus, made various experiments, which have resulted in the employment of the screens and traps which are mentioned in Mr Brown's Report. The manner of operation is as follows.

In early spring, it was reported to headquarters that one hundred and thirty-three breeding-grounds had been discovered. Each of these was therefore screened off by a ring-fence. The screens are formed of canvas about two feet high, on the top of which are sewn about four inches of oil-cloth. These are arranged so as to form a zigzag with angles of about one hundred and thirty-five degrees. At intervals, pits are dug of a regulation size—a cubic yard—so as to facilitate computation. The locusts on the march come up to the screen, climb up the canvas, get on to the oilcloth, and straightway slip down. Nothing daunted, they try again, again, and again, each time edging a little nearer to the angle. Arriving here at last, they find a pit, into which they fall or jump. Naturally, they climb up again; but find at the top a framework of wood, lined on the inside with sheet-zinc, on which they cannot walk, and consequently they fall back into the pit. Imagine thousands of the creatures all doing this at the same time, and the result will be, of course, that one-half smothered the other half, and in its turn gets smothered by a few spadefuls of earth, which the labourer, always on the watch, takes care to apply at the proper moment. The pit is then full, and is counted as such in the daily report. Mr Brown gives full details. The 'full' pits contained a depth of eighteen inches of locusts; pits three-quarters, one-half, one-quarter, and one-eighth full were returned as such, and when reduced to 'full' pits, the total number amounted to fifteen thousand nine hundred and nineteen. The whole number, however, of pits in which locusts were trapped was twenty-six thousand and sixteen, and the total number of pits dug far exceeded this.

Every pains was taken to arrive at a correct account of the number of locusts thus destroyed, and the number for this year is set down at the enormous total of fifty-six thousand one hundred and sixteen millions. Last year the number was computed approximately at one hundred and ninety-five thousand millions. With such a destruction, it was believed that this year the swarms would be less; and this anticipation was fully realised, less than one-third appearing of what was visible in 1883. This is extremely satisfactory, when we find that the swarms of 1883 were as numerous as those of 1882, which in their turn greatly exceeded those of 1881. In fact, up to 1883 the locusts had been gaining ground; now they are losing it; and it only needs care and watchfulness on our part to thoroughly

exterminate them, or at anyrate to render them practically harmless. For if the locust can only find food, it will not travel; they march simply in order to get wherewith to support existence; and if they can find enough near their birthplace, they will stop there. But of course this cannot be allowed, when we think of their multiplication next year and the years after. No; it is a question of war to the 'pit.' Efforts must not be relaxed; the system of reports from the breeding districts will still be continued; and the supply of screens and traps must always be ready for use.

This year, the large supply of material was used in a much more careful and methodical way than in any previous year. Some idea of the extent of the operations may be gathered from the fact that in one district—that of Tchingirli—there was a continuous line of screens without a break for twenty-seven miles in length, arranged in three great loops connected by a common centre. Another breeding-ground was surrounded by screens sixteen miles long; and there were many other similar cases. With screens thus fixed, with plenty of pits, and with careful supervision, the destruction should be complete. Accidents, however, will occur, some of which are preventable, whilst others are not. Heavy rains and floods, for instance, swept away some of the screens; and there were also cloudy and windy days, when the locusts will not march, and of course will not fill the pits. No doubt, occasion was taken on such days to help in the destruction by manual labour; every little helps; and it is not difficult to slay one's thousands and tens of thousands when the victims are all close together. It is not unusual to meet the creatures in a body a mile wide and a mile deep. They are about an inch and a quarter long, and a quarter of an inch wide, and march with an interval of about an inch, progressing some half-mile a day.

One would think that the importance of information to headquarters would be patent to everybody in the island; yet such is the apathy, not to say stupidity, of some of the islanders, that Mr Brown was surprised and disgusted to hear that whilst operations were at the height, locusts had been discovered at the extreme east point of the island, which had been reported free. Not only so, but no locusts had existed within thirty-five miles, nor had any been seen flying in that direction. Material was at once forwarded, but unfortunately too late, as the insects had almost arrived at the flying stage, when nothing can be done. One might as well try to reduce midges by squashing them between the hands. The district was found to be only a small one—less than half a mile in diameter. It may safely be left next year to Mr Brown's tender care.

What is the result of all this time, trouble, and expense? You could traverse the locust area and see very few; whereas in May and June of previous years you might ride through flights some of which would cover an area of several square miles. The small number that are left are thinly scattered over a comparatively small area, and as they find sufficient food in the natural grasses, they do not migrate. This year, up to August not a single flight has been seen, and best of all, nothing has been heard of damage to the crops. It is calculated that the

survivors of this year do not amount to more than one per cent. of those of last year. The problem, therefore, appears to be solved; all that is necessary is a small annual expenditure to keep the material and labour in working order.

ONE WOMAN'S HISTORY.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was but a few minutes past seven o'clock when Jules tapped at the door of Madame De Vigne's boudoir. The summons was responded to by Nanette. 'Monsieur De Miravel's compliments to Madame De Vigne, and would she grant monsieur the honour of an interview for a few minutes?'

The answer came at once: 'Madame De Vigne was ready to receive Monsieur De Miravel.'

Daylight was waning, and although the venetians were drawn half-way up the windows, the room was in twilight. To De Miravel it seemed almost in darkness as he went in; but in a few moments his eyes became more accustomed to the semi-obscurity, and he then perceived his wife standing in the middle of the floor—a tall, black-robed figure, crowned by a face whose extreme pallor, seen by that half-light, would have seemed like that of a dead woman, but for the two large, intensely glowing eyes which lighted it up.

After his first momentary hesitation, De Miravel advanced a few steps and made one of his elaborate bows. Madame De Vigne responded by a grave inclination of her head, and motioning her visitor to a chair, sat down herself on an ottoman some distance away. In the silence, not yet broken by either of them, they heard the low, far-away muttering of thunder among the hills.

De Miravel was the first to speak. 'I am desolated, madame, to have been under the necessity of seeking this interview,' he said. 'But I have been waiting, waiting, waiting till I have grown tired. I am tired of being here alone in this great hotel, where I know no one. It is now two days since I spoke to you. You know my proposition. *Eh bien!* I choose to wait no longer; I am here for your answer.' He spoke the last words with a kind of snarl, which for the moment brought his long, white, wolfish-looking teeth prominently into view.

'As you say, I am fully acquainted with your proposition,' answered Mora in cold, quiet, unflinching tones. 'But you know well how hateful to me are the conditions which you wish to impose. I think I made that point clear to you on Wednesday.'

'You were in a passion on Wednesday. I heeded not what you said.'

'But I meant every word that I said. In view of that fact, and knowing what you know—may I ask whether in the interim you have not seen some way by which those conditions may be modified—some way by which, without injury to what you conceive to be your interests, they may be made less objectionable to me?'

He shook his head impatiently. 'You are only wasting my time and yours,' he said. 'When I have said a thing, I mean it. As the conditions

were on Wednesday, even so they are now—altered in nothing. If you cannot comply with them, tell me so at once, and at once I will seek out Sir William. Ah ha! Mademoiselle Clarice had better wait awhile before she orders the robe for her wedding!'

She heard him apparently unmoved. There was not a flash, not as much as a flicker to be seen of the passion which had so possessed her on Wednesday. Her quietude surprised him, and rendered him vaguely uneasy.

'Consider, Laroche—before it is too late.'

'Too late?' he muttered under his breath.

'Peste! What can she mean?'

'You know how utterly impossible it is that I should live with you for one day, or even one hour, as your wife,' continued Mora. 'You know that I would sooner seek a refuge in the dark waters of yonder lake. Why, then, strive to make a desperate woman more desperate? And my sister!—she has never harmed you, she does not even know of your existence. Why try to wreck the happiness of her life, as you wrecked mine? Why try to shatter the fair future that lies before her? To do so can in nowise benefit you. Consider—think again before you finally decide. Have pity on this child, even though you have none on me. Ah, Laroche, you never had a sister, or you would know something of that which I feel!'

'This is child's play,' he exclaimed with a sneer. 'We are wasting time. A strong man makes use of others to effect his ends. I make use of you and your sister. I have said.' He was convinced by this time that her quietude was merely that of despair—the quietude of a criminal who submits to the hands of the executioner.

'Listen, Laroche!' she continued in the same icy, impassive tones. 'Although I am not what the world calls rich, I am not without means, as you are aware. Give me your promise to leave England, and never to seek out or in any way annoy either my sister or me, and half of all I am possessed of shall be settled upon you. It will be an income for life which nothing can rob you of.'

An eager, greedy light leaped into his eyes. 'What do you call an income, dear madame?' he said. 'How many thousand francs a year would you be prepared to settle on your brave Hector?'

'Six thousand francs a year would be about half my income.'

'Six thousand francs! And my wife's sister married to the son of one of the richest *milords* in England! *Chut!* Do you take your Hector for an imbecile?' He rose, crossed to the pier-glass over the chimney-piece, adjusted his scarf in front of it, and then went back to his chair. 'Do you know what is now the great ambition of your Hector's life?' he asked, gazing fixedly at her out of his half-shut eyes. 'But no—how should you? Listen, then, and I will tell you. It is to be introduced to two, three, or more of the great London clubs where they occupy themselves with what you English call "high play." Sir William or his son shall introduce me—when I am of their family. Six thousand francs a year! *Parbleu!* when once I have the *entrée* to two or three of the *cercles* I speak of, my

income will be nearer sixty than six thousand francs a year.'

'If such are your views, if this is the course you are determined to pursue, I am afraid that any further appeal by me would be utterly thrown away.'

'Utterly thrown away, *ma belle*, an absolute waste of time, as I said before.'

'I felt convinced from the first that it would be so.'

'Ah! Then why amuse yourself at my expense in the way you have?'

'It was not by way of amusing myself that I appealed to you, but for the ease of my conscience in the days yet to come.'

He stared at her suspiciously for a moment or two, then he said with a shrug: 'I do not comprehend you.'

She rose and pushed back her chair. 'There is nothing more to be said. I need not detain you further.'

He too rose, but for once he was evidently nonplussed. 'Nothing more to be said?' he remarked after a pause. 'It seems to me that there is much more to be said. I have not yet had your answer to the proposition I laid before you on Wednesday last.'

'I thought you understood. But if you want my answer in a few plain words, you shall have it.'

In the twilight he could see her clear shining eyes gazing steadily and fearlessly into his. Craven fears began to flutter round his heart.

'Hector Laroche, you have lost much time and put yourself to much trouble and expense in hunting down a woman whose life, years ago, you made a burden almost too bitter for her to bear—and all to no purpose. You have found me; what then? You have made a proposition to me so utterly vile as altogether to defeat your own ends. From this hour I know you not. I will never see or speak to you again. It will be at your peril to attempt to molest me. I have friends who will see that I suffer no harm at your hands. There is the door. Begone!'

'Ho, ho!' he cried with an hyena-like snarl. 'You bid me begone, do you? *Eh bien!* I must not disobey a lady's commands. I will go—but it shall be in search of Sir William.'

'Your search need not take you far; Sir William Ridsdale is here, under this roof.'

Laroche could not repress a start of surprise. He was still staring at Mora like a man at an utter loss what to say next, when a tap was heard at the door, which was followed a moment later by the entrance of Nanette: 'Sir William Ridsdale has sent word to say that he should like to see Monsieur De Miravel as soon as that gentleman is at liberty to wait upon him.'

'Monsieur De Miravel is at liberty to wait upon Sir William at once,' said Madame De Vigne in clear, staccato tones.—'Nanette, conduct monsieur to Sir William's apartment.'

Laroche scowled at her for a moment. Then he said in a low voice: 'Do you set me at defiance? Is it really that I am to tell Sir William everything?'

'Yes; I set you at defiance. Tell Sir William all that you know. *Scélérat!* do your worst.'

The scowl on his face deepened; his lips twitched, but no sound came from them. Madame

De Vigne's finger pointed to the open door at which Nanette was standing. Laroche turned on his heel and walked out of the room with the air of a whipped cur.

By this time it was nearly dark; the evening was close and sultry; distant thunder reverberated among the hills; there was the menace of a storm in the air. The grounds of the hotel were deserted, and just at present the house was as quiet as though it were some lonely country mansion, instead of a huge hostelry overflowing with guests. It was the hour consecrated to one of the most solemn duties of existence, and, with few exceptions, the flock of more or less hungry birds of passage were engaged in the pleasing process of striving to recuperate exhausted nature by means of five courses and a dessert.

Nanette, after conducting Laroche to Sir William's room, was on her way back to light the lamp in her mistress's boudoir, when, as she turned a corner of the corridor, she was suddenly confronted by Jules, between whom and herself, as being of the same nationality, a pleasant little flirtation was already in full swing. The meeting was so sudden and the corridor so dusky, that the girl started, and a low cry broke from her lips.

'Hist! do not make a noise, I beg of you, *ma'amselle*,' whispered Jules; 'but tell me, is madame in her room and alone?' His face looked very pale in the twilight, and Nanette could see that he was strangely moved.

'Madame is in her room, but she is indisposed, and cannot see any one this evening—unless,' she added archly, a moment after, 'the business of monsieur with her is of very, very great importance.'

'Ah, believe me, dear *ma'amselle*, it is of the very greatest importance. Do not delay, I beg of you! Any moment I may be missed from the *salle* and asked for. Tell madame that the affair I want to see her upon is one of life and death.'

The girl stared at him for a moment, and then went.

He stole noiselessly after her and waited outside the door. Presently the door opened, and Nanette beckoned to him to enter. He went in, and found himself alone with Madame De Vigne.

'Pardon the question, madame,' said Jules; 'but may I ask whether the gentleman—Monsieur De Miravel he calls himself—who left this room a few minutes ago is a friend of madame?'

Madame became suddenly interested. 'I have been acquainted with the person you name for a great number of years,' she replied after a moment's hesitation.

'Madame would not like any harm to happen to Monsieur De Miravel?'

'Harm? No; certainly not. I should not like harm to happen to any one. But your question is a strange one. Tell me why you ask it.'

'I ask it, because Monsieur De Miravel is in danger of his life.'

'Ah!' Her heart gave a great leap; she turned suddenly dizzy, and had to support herself against the table.

'I have told this to madame in order that she may warn Monsieur De Miravel, should she think well to do so. If he wishes to save his

life, he must leave here at once—to-night; to-morrow may be too late.'

Mora was thoroughly bewildered. What she had just been told had the effect of a stunning blow upon her; it had come so suddenly that for a little while her mind failed to realise the full meaning of the words.

'What you have just told me is so strange and terrible,' she said at last, 'that you cannot wonder if I ask you for further particulars. You assert that M. De Miravel's life is in danger. What is it that he has done? What crime has he committed, that nothing less than his death can expiate?'

Jules slowly drew in his breath with an inspiration that sounded like a sigh. What he was about to tell must be told in a whisper. 'Throughout Europe, as madame may be aware, there are certain secret Societies and propaganda, which, although known by various designations, have nearly all one great end in view. Of one such Society Monsieur De Miravel is, and has been for the last dozen years, an affiliated member. Nearly a year ago, several brothers of the Society were arrested, tried, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Certain features of the trial proved conclusively that the arrests were the result of information given by a spy. There was a traitor in the camp; but who was he? That question has at length been answered. It has been proved beyond a doubt that the traitor is the man who calls himself Monsieur De Miravel. The sentence on all traitors is death. De Miravel has been condemned to die.'

'This is horrible,' murmured Mora.

'It is simple justice, madame.'

'Has Monsieur De Miravel any knowledge or suspicion of the terrible fate to which he has been condemned?'

'None. How should he have, madame?'

Mora remained lost in thought for a few moments; then she said: 'It seems strange that you, in the position you occupy, should know all that you have told me, and yet Monsieur De Miravel himself should know nothing.'

Jules lifted his shoulders almost imperceptibly. 'It may seem strange to madame; but it is not so in reality. I, Jules Decroze, the poor *garçon*, am a humble brother of that Society which has condemned the traitor De Miravel to die. I, too, am affiliated to the sacred cause.'

'You! Oh!' Involuntarily she moved a step or two farther away.

Jules spread out his hands with a little gesture of deprecation.

'I hope you don't run any risk yourself in telling me what you have told me this evening?' said Mora after a few seconds of silence.

'If it were known that I had broken my oath, as I have broken it but now, I should be sentenced to the same fate as De Miravel. But that matters not. I have long owed madame a debt of gratitude; to-night I have endeavoured to pay it.'

'You have more, far more than paid it. You may have broken your oath, as you say, but you have done all that lay in your power to save a fellow-creature's life.'

'For your sake, madame—not for his, the traitor!' muttered Jules.

If Mora heard, she took no notice. 'You must not remain here another moment,' she said. 'You have run too much risk already. Perhaps I may be able to have a few words with you in private to-morrow. You say that Monsieur De Miravel must go away at once—to-night?'

'At once. If he lingers here over to-morrow'—He ended with one of his expressive shrugs.

Mora shuddered. 'Suppose he refuses to believe what I tell him, and puts it down as an invention for the purpose of frightening him away?'

'If madame will say these words to him, "*The right hand of the Bear is frozen*," Monsieur De Miravel will know that she speaks the truth.'

A moment later the door opened and closed noiselessly, and Mora was alone.

CHAPTER XV.

When Hector Laroche was ushered into Sir William Ridsdale's room, his eyes blinked involuntarily. The change from the dusky twilight outside to the brilliantly lighted apartment in which he now found himself fairly dazzled him for the first few seconds.

There were but two people in the room. At a large square table, covered with papers and documents written and printed, sat the baronet. At a smaller table, a little distance away, and busily writing, sat Colonel Woodruffe—the man of the portrait, as Laroche muttered to himself the moment his eyes lighted on him. Was it possible that this other man, this white-haired gentleman, whose gaze was bent so keenly on him from under his bushy brows, was the great Sir William himself? He remembered to have seen this person on more than one occasion walking about the grounds in the company of Miss Loraine, but he had never troubled himself to inquire whom he might be. If he were really Sir William, then had he been at the hotel for two or three days, and he, Laroche, had never discovered that fact. What a blunder!

The Frenchman placed his right hand over his heart and bowed obsequiously; then he advanced with slow, cat-like movements towards the table, but came to a stand while he was yet some three or four paces away. The keen eyes of the white-haired gentleman, fixed so persistently on him, made him feel dreadfully uncomfortable. He had a great dislike to being stared at in that way.

'You are Hector Laroche, *ex-déporté* No. 897; and I am Sir William Ridsdale.'

For once his start of surprise was thoroughly genuine. 'How! Monsieur knows!—'

'Everything. Madame De Vigne has disclosed to me the whole dreadful story of her married life. Her I pity from the bottom of my heart; but for you, scoundrel, I have no feeling save one of utter loathing and contempt!'

'Monsieur'—whined Laroche with an indescribable writhing of his long lean body.

'Silence, fellow!' said Sir William sternly. 'It is for you to listen, and not to speak.' He rose and crossed to Colonel Woodruffe and spoke to him in a low voice.

The baronet returned to his seat. 'It is not

my intention to say a great deal to you, Monsieur Laroche,' resumed Sir William; 'I wish to rid myself of your presence as soon as may be; and what I have to say will be very much to the purpose.'

Laroche writhed again, but did not speak. Events had taken a turn so utterly unexpected by him, the ground had been so completely cut from under his feet, that he seemed to have nothing left to say.

'Madame De Vigne is an Englishwoman, and as such is entitled to the protection of the laws of her country. The first point I wish you clearly to understand is, that her income is settled strictly upon herself, and that you are not entitled to claim so much as a single franc of her money. This time, at least, you will not be allowed to rob her, as you did once before. The second point I wish you clearly to understand is, that if you in any way harm, molest, or annoy Madame De Vigne or her sister, you will very quickly find yourself within the walls of an English prison, where you will be able to meditate on your folly at your leisure. This is a matter which Madame De Vigne's friends will look to particularly, consequently I warn you in time. And now, having proved all this to you, I am induced, by certain considerations which in nowise affect you, to make you an offer which you will probably see the wisdom of accepting. The conditions of my offer are these: You shall at once quit England and never set foot in it again; you shall neither write to Madame De Vigne nor seek to hold any communication of any kind whatever with her or any one connected with her. In return for your faithful obedience to these instructions, you shall be paid an annuity of three thousand francs a year. The sum shall be paid you in quarterly instalments by my Paris agent, to whom you will present yourself in person once every three months. When you cease to present yourself, it shall be considered either that you no longer care to claim the annuity or that you are dead. Such is the offer I have to make you, Monsieur Laroche; you can either accept it or decline it at your own good pleasure; for my own part I care not which you do.'

Three thousand francs a year! was Laroche's first thought. Why, scarcely half an hour ago, his wife had offered him just double the amount on precisely the same terms, and he had laughed in her face. Imbecile that he had been!

Coward though he was at heart, as nearly all braggarts are, if Laroche just then had happened to possess a revolver, he would have felt strongly tempted to make use of it and risk the consequences. How he hated those two men!—one white-haired, smiling, benevolent-looking, as he had seen him walking about the grounds, but with such a hand of iron hidden in his velvet glove; the other stern, impassive, coldly contemptuous, who had taken no more notice of him during the interview than if he were a dog. Yes, he hated them both with the ferocious hatred of a tiger balked of the prey in which its claws are already fixed.

This other man he felt nearly sure was in love with his wife; and he was just as certain that Mora De Vigne was in love with him. Even at a time like that, it thrilled him with a

malicious joy to think that so long as he, Laroche, was alive they could never be more to each other than they were now. Perhaps if he had not appeared on the scene till a month or two later, they might have been married by that time. If he had only known—if he had only had the slightest suspicion that such was the state of affairs, he would have kept carefully in the background till the newly wedded couple should have returned from their honeymoon, and then have made himself known. That would have been a revenge worthy of the name. But now—

Sir William's voice recalled him to realities. 'Perhaps you wish for a little time before you make up your mind?' he said.

Laroche shook his head. His nimble brain had already taken in the altered state of affairs; he saw that the day had gone hopelessly against him, that the battle was lost, and that the only thing left him to do was to accept from the conquerors the best terms that he could induce them to offer. If only he had not refused that six thousand francs! But to a man in his position even three thousand francs a year was better, infinitely better, than nothing. It would at least suffice to find him in absinth and cigarettes, and would serve to blunt the keen edge of chronic impecuniosity.

'Three thousand francs a year, Sir William! It is a bagatelle—a mere bagatelle.'

'Take it or leave it.'

The Frenchman spread out his hands and drew his shoulders up nearly to his ears. '*Ma foi!* I have no choice. I must accept.'

'In that case, nothing more need be said, except that you will leave here by the first train to-morrow morning. Here is a bank-note with which to defray the expenses of your journey; and here is the address of my agent, on whom you will please call on Wednesday morning next, by which time he will be in receipt of my instructions.' Sir William pushed the note and the address across the table in the direction of Laroche as though the latter were some plague-stricken creature with whom he was fearful of coming into closer contact.

The Frenchman advanced a step or two, picked up the papers, and put them away slowly and carefully inside his pocket-book, looking the baronet full in the eyes as he did so. His teeth were hard set, and his breath came and went with a fuller rise and fall than usual, but otherwise there was nothing to betray the tempest of passion at work within him. When he had put his pocket-book away again, and still with his eyes bent full on the baronet, he said in a low, deep voice: 'It is possible, Sir William, that we may some day meet again.' Then with a nod, that might mean much or that might have no meaning at all, he turned and walked slowly out of the room.

The Frenchman found Nanette waiting for him in the corridor. 'If you please, monsieur, my mistress desires to see you in her room immediately on a matter of much importance.'

'Can it be that she is going to renew the offer of the six thousand francs?' was the first question that Laroche asked himself. Checkmated at every turn though he had been, and though all his fine castles in the air had come tumbling about his ears, he began to hope

that more might be saved from the wreck than had seemed probable only a few minutes ago, and it was not without a certain revival of spirits and a certain return to his old braggadocio manner that he followed Nanette to Madame De Vigne's room. Just as he was passing the staircase window, the lightning's lurid scroll unrolled itself for an instant against the walls of blackness outside. Laroche shuddered, he knew not why. A moment or two later he found himself once more in the presence of his wife. In the interim, the lamp had been lighted and the curtains drawn.

A FEW NOTES ON PERSIAN ART.

THE limner's art in Persia has few patrons, and the professional draughtsman of the present day in that country must needs be an enthusiast, and an art-lover for art's sake, as his remuneration is so small as to be a mere pittance; and the man who can live by his brush must be clever indeed. The Persians are an eminently practical people, and buy nothing unless it be of actual utility; hence the artist has generally to sink to the mere decorator; and as all, even the very rich, expect a great deal for a little money, the work must be scamped in order to produce a great effect for a paltry reward. The artists, moreover, are all self-taught, or nearly so, pupilage merely consisting of the drudgery of preparing the canvas, panel, or other material for the master, mixing the colours, filling in backgrounds, varnishing, &c. There are no schools of art, no lectures, no museums of old or contemporary masters, no canons of taste, no drawing from nature or the model, no graduated studies, or system of any kind. There is, however, a certain custom of adhering to tradition and the conventional; and most of the art-workmen of Iran, save the select few, are mere reproducers of the ideas of their predecessors.

The system of perspective is erroneous; but neither example nor argument can alter the views of a Persian artist on this subject. Leaving aside the wonderful blending of colours in native carpets, tapestries, and embroideries, all of which improve by the toning influence of age, the modern Persian colourist is remarkable for his skill in the constant use of numerous gaudy and incongruous colours, yet making one harmonious and effective whole, which surprises us by its daring, but compels our reluctant admiration.

Persian pictorial art is original, and it is cheap; the wages of a clever artist are about one shilling and sixpence a day. In fact, he is a mere day-labourer, and his terms are, so many days' pay for a certain picture. In this pernicious system of time-work lies the cause of the scamping of many really ingenious pieces of work.

As a copyist the Persian is unrivalled; he has a more than Chinese accuracy of reproduction; every copy is a fac-simile of its original, the detail being scamped, or the reverse, according to the scale of payment. In unoriginal work, such as

the multiplication of some popular design, a man will pass a lifetime, because he finds it pay better to do this than to originate. This kind of unoriginal decoration is most frequent in the painted mirror cases and book-covers, the designs of which are ancient; and the painter merely reproduces the successful and popular work of some old and forgotten master.

But where the Persian artist shines is in his readiness to undertake any style or subject; geometrical patterns—and they are very clever in originating these; scroll-work scenes from the poets; likenesses, miniatures, paintings of flowers or birds; in any media, on any substance, oils, water, or enamel, and painting on porcelain; all are produced with rapidity, wonderful spirit, and striking originality. In landscape, the Persian is very weak; and his attempts at presenting the nude, of which he is particularly fond, are mostly beneath contempt. A street scene will be painted in oils and varnished to order 'in a week' on a canvas a yard square, the details of the painting desired being furnished in conversation. While the patron is speaking, the artist rapidly makes an outline sketch in white paint; and any suggested alterations are made in a few seconds by the facile hand of the *ustad nakosh* (master-painter), a term used to distinguish the artist from the mere portrait-painter or *akkas*, a branch of the profession much despised by the artists, a body of men who consider their art a mechanical one, and their guild no more distinguished than those of other handicraftsmen.

A Persian artist will always prefer to reproduce rather than originate, because, as a copy will sell for the same price as an original, by multiplication more money can be earned in a certain time, than by the exercise of originality. Rarely, among the better class of artists, is anything actually out of drawing; the perspective is of course faulty, and resembles that of early specimens of Byzantine art. Such monstrosities as the making the principal personages giants, and the subsidiaries dwarfs, are common; while the beauties are represented as much bejewelled; but this is done to please the buyer's taste, and the artist knows its absurdity. There is often considerable weakness as to the rendering of the extremities; but as the Persian artist never draws, save in portraiture, from the life, this is not to be wondered at.

The writer has before him a fair instance of the native artist's rendering of the scene at the administration of the bastinado. This picture is an original painting in oils, twenty-four inches by sixteen, on *papier-mâché*. The details were given to the artist by the writer in conversation, sketched by him in white paint on the *papier-mâché* during the giving of the order, in the course of half an hour; and the finished picture was completed, varnished, and delivered in a week. The price paid for this original work in oils in 1880 was seven shillings and sixpence. The costumes are quite accurate in the minutest detail; the many and staring colours employed

are such as are in actual use; while the general *mise en scène* is very correct.

Many similar oil-paintings were executed for the writer by Persian artists, giving graphic renderings of the manners and customs of this little-known country. They were always equally spirited, and minutely correct as to costume and detail, at the same low price; a small present for an extraordinarily successful performance gladdening the heart of the artist beyond his expectations.

As to original work by Persian artists in water-colour, remuneration is the same—so much per diem. A series of water-colours giving minute details of Persian life were wished; and a clever artist was found as anxious to proceed as the writer was eager to obtain the sketches. The commission was given, and the subjects desired carefully indicated to the artist, who, by a rapid outline sketch in pencil, showed his intelligence and grasp of the subject. The writer, delighted at the thought of securing a correct and permanent record of the manners and customs of a little-known people, congratulated himself. But, alas! he counted his chickens before hatching; for the artist, on coming with his next water-colour, demanded, and received, a double wage. A similar result followed the finishing of each drawing; and though the first only cost three shillings, and the second six, the writer was reluctantly compelled to stop his commissions, after paying four times the price of the first for his third water-colour, on the artist demanding twenty-four shillings for a fourth—not that the work was more, but as he found himself appreciated, the wily painter kept to arithmetical progression as his scale of charge; a very simple principle, which all artists must devoutly wish they could insist on.

For a reduced copy of a rather celebrated painting, of which the figures were life-size, of what might be called, comparatively speaking, a Persian old master—for this reduction, in oils, fourteen inches by eight, and fairly well done, the charge was a sovereign. The piece was painted on a panel. The subject is a royal banquet scene in Ispahan—the date a century and a half ago. The dresses are those of the time—the ancient court costume of Persia. The king in a brocaded robe is represented seated on a carpet at the head of a room, his drinking-cup in his hand; while his courtiers are squatted in two rows at the sides of the room, and are also carousing. Minstrels and singers occupy the foreground of the picture; and a row of handsome dancing-girls form the central group. All the figures are portraits of historical personages; and in the copy, the likenesses are faithfully retained.

The palaces of Ispahan are decorated with large oil-paintings by the most eminent Persian artists of their day. All are life-size, and none are devoid of merit. Some are very clever, particularly the likenesses of Futeh Ali Shah and his sons, several of whom were strikingly like their father. As Futeh Ali Shah had an acknowledged family of seventy-two, this latter fact is curious. These paintings are without frames, spaces having been made in the walls to receive them. The Virgin Mary is frequently represented in these mural paintings; also a Mr Strachey, a

young diplomat who accompanied the English mission to Persia in the reign of our Queen Elizabeth, is still admired as a type of adolescent beauty. He is represented with auburn hair in the correct costume of the period; and copies of his portrait are still often painted on the pen-cases of amateurs. These pen-cases, or *kalamdāns*, are the principal occupation of the miniature-painter. As one-fourth of the male population of Persia can write, and as each man has one or more pen-cases, the artist finds a constant market for his wares in their adornment. The pen-case is a box of *papier-mâché* eight inches long, an inch and a half broad, and the same deep. Some of them, painted by artists of renown, are of great value, forty pounds being a common price to pay for such a work of art by a rich amateur. Several fine specimens may be seen in the Persian Collection at the South Kensington Museum. It is possible to spend a year's hard work on the miniatures painted on a pen-case. These are very minute and beautiful. The writer possesses a pen-case painted during the lifetime of Futeh Ali Shah, a king of Persia who reigned long and well. All the faces—none more than a quarter of an inch in diameter—are likenesses; and the long black beard of the king reaching to his waist, is not exaggerated, for such beards are common in Persia.

Bookbinding in Persia is an art, and not a trade; and here the flower and bird painter finds his employment. Bright bindings of boards with a leather back are decorated by the artist, principally with presentments of birds and flowers, both being a strange mixture of nature and imagination; for if a Persian artist in this branch thinks that he can improve on nature in the matter of colour, he attempts it. The most startling productions are the result; his nightingales being birds of gorgeous plumage, and the colours of some of his flowers saying much for his imagination. This method of 'painting the lily' is common in Persia; for the narcissus—bouquets of which form the constant ornament in spring of even the poorest homes—is usually 'improved' by rings of coloured paper, silk, or velvet being introduced over the inner ring of petals. Startling floral novelties are the result; and the European seeing them for the first time, is invariably deceived, and cheated into admiration of what turns out afterwards to be a transparent trick. Of course, this system of binding each book in an original cover of its own, among a nation so literary as the Persians, gives a continuous and healthy impetus to the art of the flower-painter.

Enamelling in Persia is a dying art. The best enamels are done on gold, and often surrounded by a ring or frame of transparent enamel, grass-green in colour. This green enamel, or rather transparent paste, is supposed to be peculiar to the Persian artist. At times, the gold is hammered into depressions, which are filled with designs in enamel on a white paste, the spaces between the depressions being burnished gold. Large plaques are frequently enamelled on gold for the rich; and often the golden water-pipes are decorated with enamels, either alone, or in combination with incrustated gems.

Yet another field remains to the Persian artist—that of engraving on gold, silver, brass, copper,

and iron. Here the work is usually artistically good, and always original, no two pieces being alike.

Something must be said about the artist and his studio. Abject poverty is the almost universal lot of the Persian artist. He is, however, an educated man, and generally well read. His marvellous memory helps him to retain the traditional attributes of certain well-known figures: the black-bearded Rüstüm (the Persian Hercules), and his opponent the Deev Suffid or White Demon; Leila and Mujnün, the latter of whom retired to the wilderness for love of the beautiful Leila; and in a painfully attenuated state, all his ribs being very apparent, is always represented as conversing with the wild beasts, who sit around him in various attitudes of respectful attention. Dr Tanner could never hope to reach the stage of interesting emaciation to which the Persian artists represent Mujnün to have attained. Another popular subject is that of Solomon in all his glory.

These legends are portrayed with varying art but unquestionable spirit, and often much humour; while the poetical legends of the mythical history of ancient Persia, full of strange imagery, find apt illustrators in the Persian artist. The palmy days of book-illustration have departed; the cheap reprints of Bombay have taken away the *raison d'être* of the calligraphist and book-illustrators, and the few really great artists who remain are employed by the present Shah in illustrating his great copy of the *Arabian Nights* by miniatures which emulate the beauty and detail of the best specimens of ancient monkish art, or in making bad copies of European lithographs to 'adorn' the walls of the royal palaces.

As for the painter's studio, it is usually a bare but light apartment, open to the winds, in a corner of which, on a scrap of matting, the artist kneels, sitting on his heels. (It tires an oriental to sit in a chair.) A tiny table a foot high holds all his materials; his paints are mixed on a tile; and his palette is usually a bit of broken crockery. His brushes he makes himself. Water-pipe in mouth—a luxury that even an artist can afford, in a country where tobacco is fourpence a pound—his work held on his knee in his left hand, without a mahl-stick or the assistance of a colour-man, the artist squats contentedly at his work. He is ambitious, proud of his powers, and loves his art for art's sake. Generally, he does two classes of work—the one the traditional copies of the popular scenes before described, or the painting on pen-cases—by this he lives; the other purely ideal, in which he deals with art from a higher point of view, and practises the particular branch which he affects.

As a painter of likenesses, the Persian seldom succeeds in flattering. The likeness is assuredly obtained; but the sitter is usually 'grayed,' and a caricature is generally the result. This is not the case in the portraits of females, and in the ideal heads of women and children. The large dreamy eye and long lashes, the full red lips, and naturally high colour, the jetty or dark auburn locks (a colour caused by the use of henna, a dye) of the Persian women in their natural luxuriance, lend themselves to the successful production of the peculiarly felicitous representation of female

beauty in which the Persian artist delights. Accuracy in costume is highly prized, and the minutiae of dress are indicated with much aptness, the varied pattern of a shawl or scarf being rendered with almost Chinese detail. Beauty of the brunette type is the special choice of the artist and amateur, and 'salt'—as a high-coloured complexion is termed—is much admired.

Like the ancient Byzantine artist, the Persian makes a free use of gold and silver in his work. When wishing to represent the precious metals, he first gilds or silvers the desired portion of the canvas or panel, and then with a fine brush puts in shadows, &c. In this way a strangely magnificent effect is produced. The presentations of mailed warriors are done in this way; and the jewelled chairs, thrones, and goblets in which the oriental mind delights. Gilt backgrounds, too, are not uncommon, and their effect is far from displeasing.

The painting of portraits of Mohammed, Ali, Houssein, and Hassan—the last three, relatives of the Prophet, and the principal martyred saints in the Persian calendar, is almost a trade in itself, though the representation of the human form is contrary to the Mohammedan religion, and the saints are generally represented as veiled and faceless figures. Yet in these particular cases, custom has over-ridden religious law, and the *Schamayul* (or portrait of Ali) is common. He is represented as a portly personage of swarthy hue; his dark and scanty beard, which is typical of the family of Mohammed, crisply curled; his hand is grasping his sword; and he is usually depicted as wearing a green robe and turban (the holy colour of the *Seyyids* or descendants of the Prophet). A nimbus surrounds his head; and he is seated on an antelope's skin, for the Persians say that skins were used in Arabia before the luxury of carpets was known there.

Humble as is the lot of the Persian artist, he expects to be treated by the educated with consideration, and would be terribly hurt at any want of civility. One well-known man, Agha Abdullah of Shiraz, generally insisted on regaling the writer with coffee, which he prepared himself when his studio was visited. To have declined this would have been to give mortal offence. On one of these visits, his little brasier of charcoal was nearly extinguished, and the host had recourse to a curious kind of fire-igniter, reviver, or rather steam-blast, that as yet is probably undescribed in books. It was of hammered copper, and had a date on it that made it three hundred years old. It was fairly well modelled; and this curious domestic implement was in the similitude of a small duck preening its breast; consequently, the open beak, having a spout similar to that of a tea-kettle, was directed downwards. The Persian poured an ounce or so of water into the copper bird, and placed it on the expiring embers. Certainly the result was surprising. In a few minutes the small quantity of water boiled fiercely; a jet of steam was emitted from the open bill, and very shortly the charcoal was burning brightly. The water having all boiled away, the Persian triumphantly removed this scientific bellows with his tongs, and prepared coffee.

No mention has been made of the curious bazaar pictures, sold for a few pence. These cost

little, but are very clever, and give free scope for originality, which is the great characteristic of the Persian artist. They consist of studies of town-life, ideal pictures of dancing-girls, and such-like. All are bold, ingenious, and original. But bazaar pictures would take a chapter to themselves, and occupy more space than can be spared.

COLONEL REDGRAVE'S LEGACY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

WE must ask the reader to accompany us to Bury Street, St James's, and learn how Miss Jones has borne the calamity of her lodger's good fortune; for calamity Martha considered the munificent legacy of Colonel Redgrave, so far as her own matrimonial prospects were concerned. If these prospects were dubious prior to his death, they were now nearly hopeless. This was a fact the housekeeper was unable to conceal from herself, in spite of her efforts to take a sanguine view of affairs. The letters of Septimus were more business-like than ever; and Miss Jones agreed with her mother that if Septimus chose to contract a matrimonial alliance, they would be powerless to interpose the smallest obstacle to prevent it. About this time, Mr Bradbury, the second occupant of apartments in Bury Street, returned from Monaco, where he had been spending his annual vacation. Mr Bradbury was a lawyer and a bachelor, and about sixty-five years of age. He was in no respect a favourite with Miss Jones, who in the course of a long residence had learned some of the faults and failings of her legal tenant. The most important of these was a love of gambling. At times, the mental depression of the lawyer was so excessive, that Martha entertained fears that he would be guilty of some rash act which would render notorious the hitherto quiet house in Bury Street. But a sudden turn in Fortune's wheel would disperse the mental clouds of the gambler, and he would resume his usual cheerful manner and speech. On the evening of his arrival from Monaco, he dined in a more than usual *recherché* manner, and when the dessert had been placed on the table, he requested the presence of Miss Jones for a brief space, to discuss a very important matter of business. Mr Bradbury was a thin, spare man, with keen restless gray eyes, which took in the surroundings at a glance. He sat in his luxurious armchair, with his feet crossed on a footstool, and as he held up a glass of '47 port to the light of the chandelier, he looked the picture of comfort and happy enjoyment. Yet was the mind of that man racked with consuming cares, for he had had a bad time of it at Monaco, and he had not only lost his own cash, but a considerable sum belonging to other people, in the shape of trust moneys, &c. He requested Miss Jones to be seated, also to take a glass of wine. Miss Jones complied with the first request, but declined the second.

'I have only learned the death of Colonel Redgrave at Shanklin since my return to London. I must have accidentally omitted at Monaco reading that portion of the *Times* which contained the announcement. On a memorable occasion I transacted some legal business for him. My fellow-lodger Mr Redgrave appears to have tumbled into a good thing in the shape of a very handsome legacy.' Mr Bradbury paused a moment; but Miss Jones made no response, but sat with her large black eyes fixed on the twitching features of the lawyer, who was now evidently under the influence of strong excitement. 'I have not lived all these years under your comfortable roof, Miss Jones, without becoming acquainted with the special relations which exist between Mr Redgrave and yourself.' Again the lawyer paused, in expectation of Miss Jones making some reply. 'I mean that I have ever considered Miss Jones as the certain and future Mrs Redgrave.'

'You can hardly expect me, Mr Bradbury, to answer such a statement,' replied Martha in a somewhat severe tone.

'I cannot. But it is necessary that I should assume such to be the case. You do not deny it? Now, I can put twenty thousand pounds into the scale which contains your right to become Mrs Redgrave, and I can deprive him of that amount, if he declines to make you his wife. I do not wish to speak against your future husband, but he is selfish and avaricious, and I think he will succumb to the temptation I have it in my power to lay before him. A short time before I started for Monaco, Colonel Redgrave called on me at my office. I had known him many years ago in India. He desired me to draw up a will, in which he revoked the bequest to Mr Septimus Redgrave *in toto*. He had not been prepossessed with his cousin latterly; in fact, he had conceived the most intense dislike for him. He preferred that I should execute the will, instead of employing Mr Lockwood, the son of the late family lawyer, for what reason I know not.' Mr Bradbury rose from his chair, and unlocking a small cabinet, produced a folded parchment suitably indorsed. 'Here is the veritable last will and testament of the late COLONEL REDGRAVE, in which the date and purport of the previous will are specially mentioned, duly signed and properly witnessed, I need scarcely say. If I were to put it in yonder fire, nothing could disturb Mr Redgrave in the enjoyment of his legacy. Now, I am going to place implicit confidence in your honour, Miss Jones. I shall require ten per cent, or two thousand pounds. You shall require the hand in marriage of Mr Septimus Redgrave. Should he refuse these terms, this will shall be enforced, and Mr Redgrave loses twenty thousand pounds, and a lady who, I am convinced, would make him an excellent wife. You will naturally say: "Why should Mr Bradbury run the risk of penal servitude for such a sum as two thousand pounds?" In reply, I deny that I run any risk, and that sum of money will stave off heavier consequences than I care to name.'

It would be difficult to describe the whirlwind of mental emotion which agitated the bosom of

Martha as she listened to the harangue of the lawyer. On the one hand she saw the possibility of realising her life-long ambition, of becoming the wife of a man with an income of nearly two thousand a year, not to speak of the social position attending it. Martha remembered reading a novel by one of the most popular authors of our time, wherein the heroine committed a far more heinous offence with respect to a will than its mere suppression, and yet the delinquent preserved not only the love and esteem of all the characters of the tale, but even the good opinion of the readers thereof.

The lawyer watched the flushed cheek of his listener with feelings of hope, and plied poor Martha with such specious arguments as to the nullity of risk and the immense gain to be derived from the prosecution of his plan, that she at length consented to proceed to Shanklin by an early train on the following morning and seek a private interview with Mr Redgrave. As she rose to depart, Martha inquired of the lawyer the name of the fortunate recipient of the legacy. 'Miss Blanche Fraser,' was the reply.

Mr Redgrave was considerably astonished on the morning following the interview we have described when Miss Jones was announced. He pulled out his watch, and finding it wanted an hour to luncheon, decided to see her at once. He found Martha in the library. She was pale and excited. 'Well, Martha, I hope nothing is the matter? All well in Bury Street?'

'Yes, Mr Redgrave. I wish to speak to you in private.'

'Well, speak away, Martha,' retorted Septimus, somewhat testily.

'Pardon me; walls have ears. Can we not go into the grounds?'

Septimus paused a moment, surprised at the request, but presently assented. He led the way through the hall, and finally stopped in a small orchard adjoining the garden. 'Now, Martha, you can speak with as much security as if you were in the middle of Salisbury Plain.'

'I am the bearer of ill news.'

Septimus turned pale as he beheld the unaccustomed expression of the features of the speaker.

'But it is in my power to ward off the blow, or, I should say, in *your* power. I will come to the point at once. The late Colonel Redgrave employed Mr Bradbury to make a subsequent will, in which he annulled the will by which you inherit your legacy.'

Septimus felt his knees tremble beneath him, his teeth chattered, and he staggered towards a garden-seat which was close at hand.

Martha beheld with satisfaction the effect of the communication upon her auditor.

He gasped forth: 'And who is the legatee?'

'Miss Blanche Fraser.'

'Gracious powers! The lady to whom I proposed!' These words were not lost on Martha. They gave her increased determination to proceed with her dangerous mission.

'You can still retain the fortune, if you will perform an act of tardy justice.'

'What do you mean?' exclaimed Septimus, with a lurking suspicion of the nature of the act required.

'Listen patiently for a few moments. For

twenty-five years you have been a resident under my mother's roof; during fifteen years of that time you have treated me as something more than a housekeeper; you have treated me as a friend. In return, I have been to you as a sister. I have watched over your comforts in health, have nursed you in sickness, and wasted all my young days in waiting for the moment when you would reward my life-long devotion by making me your wife.'

'My wife!' retorted Septimus angrily. 'Ridiculous!'

'Unless you do so,' pursued Martha, 'the second will will be put in force.'

'And how do you propose to set aside that will, if you become my wife?' exclaimed Septimus.

'By simply putting it into the fire,' replied Martha in a calm decided tone.

Now, it was almost instantaneously apparent to Martha that both she and Mr Bradbury had displayed a deplorable lack of judgment, when they unanimously came to the conclusion that Septimus Redgrave would eagerly seize the bait held out to him by the destruction of the second will. Selfish and avaricious he might be, but not sufficiently so to induce him to stain his conscience with the commission of so great a crime as that suggested to him by a man in dire extremity, and a woman who hoped to realise her life-long ambition by one grand coup.

'You cannot mean what you say, Miss Jones, at least I hope not,' exclaimed Septimus in a severe tone. 'You have been led into this by that man Bradbury, whom I have always considered a great scoundrel.'

'You refuse my offer then?' said Martha in a voice pregnant with despair.

'I will not condescend to answer you,' said Septimus. 'You had better return at once to London. I cannot offer you any hospitality. In the first place, my sisters have a strong prejudice against you, which I must say is not without warrant; and in the second place, I am engaged to be married to the mother of the fortunate legatee. So, if I do not become the possessor of the wealth of the late Colonel Redgrave, my wife's daughter will inherit; so the money will still be in the family.—Good-morning.'

Septimus bowed, and would have left the unhappy Martha without further speech; but the housekeeper caught him by the arm, as she cried in hoarse accents: 'At least you will promise never to mention to any human being the scheme I proposed for your benefit?'

'I promise,' curtly replied Septimus, and left the orchard without more ado, the wretched Martha gazing after his retreating figure with features on which despair in its acutest phase was deeply written.

We have but little to add respecting the personages who have figured in our tale. Mrs Fraser was, as the reader will readily imagine, inexpressibly mortified at so suddenly losing the legacy bequeathed by the late Colonel Redgrave. But if anything could soften the blow, it was the fact that the fortunate recipient was her only child, her dear Blanche, who was shortly afterwards married to Mr Frank Lockwood. On the same day Mrs Fraser changed her name for that of Redgrave.

Septimus never entered the house in Bury Street again, employing an agent for the removal of his household gods and the numerous curios he had accumulated during his long residence as the tenant of Mrs Jones.

Immediately after the failure of his nefarious plot, Mr Bradbury posted the second will to Miss Blanche Fraser, and immediately thereafter disappeared from Bury Street and Lincoln's Inn. Several unfortunate individuals suffered severely in consequence, as it was found that large sums intrusted to him by confiding clients had disappeared, 'leaving not a wrack behind.'

Mr Lockwood is now one of the most rising solicitors in London; his undeniable abilities, by a singular coincidence, being universally recognised immediately after the inheritance by his wife of Colonel Redgrave's legacy.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHEN we are told that 'a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,' the fact appears to be self-evident. Yet there was a time when there was something in a name. We have abundant evidence from the history of the ancients, and from observations of savage tribes, to show that they believed in some inseparable and mysterious connection between a name and the object bearing it, which has given rise to a remarkable series of superstitions, some of which have left traces even amongst ourselves.

The Jews believed that the name of a child would have a great influence in shaping its career; and we have a remarkable instance of this sort of superstition in quite a different quarter of the world. Catlin, the historian of the Canadian Indians, tells us that when he was among the Mohawks, an old chief, by way of paying him a great compliment, insisted on conferring upon him his own name, *Cayendorongue*. 'He had been,' Catlin explains, 'a noted warrior; and told me that now I had a right to assume to myself all the acts of valour he had performed, and that now my name would echo from hill to hill over all the Five Nations.'

The generosity of the Mohawk chief will doubtless be more appreciated when we observe that it is seldom the superstition takes the form of giving one's name away as in his case; on the contrary, most savages are very much opposed to mentioning their names. A well-known writer points out that the Indians of British Columbia have a strange prejudice against telling their own names, and his observation is confirmed by travellers all over the world. In many tribes, if the indiscreet question is asked them, they will nudge their neighbour and get him to answer for them. The mention of a name by the unwary has sometimes been followed by unpleasant results. We are told, for instance, by Mr Blackhouse, of a native lady of Van Diemen's Land who stoned an English gentleman for having, in his ignorance of Tasmanian etiquette, casually mentioned the name of one of her sons. Nothing

will induce a Hindu woman to mention the name of her husband; in alluding to him she uses a variety of descriptive epithets, such as 'the master,' &c., but avoids his proper name with as scrupulous care as members of the House of Commons when speaking of each other in the course of debate. Traces of this may be seen even in Scotland; one may often come across women in rural districts who are in the habit of speaking of their husbands by no other name than 'he.' To such an extent is this superstition carried among some savage tribes, that the real names of children are concealed from their birth upwards, and they are known by fictitious names until their death.

The fear of witchcraft probably is the explanation of all those superstitions. If a name gets known to a sorcerer, he can use it as a handle wherewith to work his spells upon the bearer. When the Romans laid siege to a town, they set about at once to discover the name of its tutelary deity, so that they might coax the god into surrendering his charge. In order to prevent their receiving the same treatment at the hands of their enemies, they carefully concealed the name of the tutelary deity of Rome, and are said to have killed Valerius Soranus for divulging it. We have several examples in our nursery tales of the concealment of a name being connected with a spell. It is made use of by Wagner in the plot of his opera of *Lohengrin*, where the hero, yielding to the curiosity of his lady-love, divulges the secret of his name, and has in consequence to leave her and return to a state of enchantment. In Grimm's tale of *The Gold Spinner*, again, we have an instance of a spell being broken by the discovery of the sorcerer's name.

Reluctance to mention names reaches its height in the case of dangerous or mysterious agencies. In Borneo, the natives avoid naming the small-pox. In Germany, the hare must not be named, or the rye-crop will be destroyed; and to mention the name of this innocent animal at sea, is, or was, reckoned by the Aberdeenshire fishermen an act of impiety, the punishment of which to be averted only by some mysterious charm. The Laplanders never mention the name of the bear, but prefer to speak of him as 'the old man with the fur-coat.' The motive here appears to be a fear that by naming the dreaded object his actual presence will be evoked; and this idea is preserved in one of our commonest sayings. Even if the object of terror does not actually appear, he will at least listen when he hears his name; and if anything unpleasant is said of him he is likely to resent it. Hence, in order to avoid even the semblance of reproach, his very name is made flattering. This phenomenon, generally termed euphemism, is of very common occurrence. The Greeks, for example, called the Furies the 'Well-disposed ones;' and the wicked fairy Puck was christened 'Robin Goodfellow' by the English peasantry. The modern Greeks euphemise the name of vinegar into 'the sweet one.' Were its real name to be mentioned, all the wine in the house would turn sour. We have an example of the converse of the principle of euphemism

at work in the case of mothers among the savage tribes of Tonquin giving their children hideous names in order to frighten away evil spirits from molesting them.

It is, however, in the case of the most dreaded and most mysterious of all our enemies—Death—that the superstition becomes most apparent. 'The very name of Death,' says Montaigne, 'strikes terror into people, and makes them cross themselves.' Even the unsuperstitious have a vague reluctance to mentioning this dreaded name. Rather than say, 'If Mr So-and-so should die,' we say, 'If anything should happen to Mr So-and-so.' The Romans preferred the expression 'He has lived' to 'He is dead.' 'M. Thiers a vécu' was the form in which that statesman's death was announced; not 'M. Thiers est mort.'

The same reluctance is noticeable in mentioning the names of persons who are dead. A writer on the Shetland Isles tells us that no persuasion will induce a widow to mention her dead husband's name. When we do happen to allude to a deceased friend by name, we often add some such expression as 'Rest his soul!' by way of antidote to our rashness; and this expression seems to have been used by the Romans in the same way. As might be expected, we find this carried to a great extreme among savages. In some tribes, when a man dies who bore the name of some common object—'fire,' for instance—the name for fire must be altered in consequence; and as proper names among savages are almost invariably the names of common objects, the rapid change that takes place in the language and the inconvenience resulting therefrom may be imagined. Civilisation has indeed made enormous progress from this cumbersome superstition to our own philosophy, which can ask with haughty indifference, 'What's in a name?'

THE HAUNTED BRIDGE.

A TALE OF THE HIGHLANDS.

THERE are probably few readers who are not familiar, to a greater or lesser extent, with the well-ventilated subject of superstition in the Highlands of Scotland. There are few mountain countries throughout the world that are not rich in lore and legend relating to the supernatural: their very configuration suggests that agencies more than ordinary have been employed in shaping out their features. It is curious to notice how very largely the demoniac theory enters into the calculations of the peasantry. For one Fairy glen or knove there are a dozen Devil's mills, bridges, caldrons, or punchbowls; in fact, it is almost always the beings that are supposed to be baleful and inimical to the human race that have had their personality perpetuated in these legends. This certainly seems a little incongruous; but as this is not a treatise on demonology, we are content to leave it so.

Superstition is part of the being of the mountaineer. Brave even to rashness, he will face the natural dangers that beset his life—in the torrent, on the peak, or in the forest; he fears no odds when he meets his foes. And yet this man, who can tread the dizzy ledge on the face of a precipice, who can hurl himself on levelled steel,

is more timid and frightened than a child, when he conceives that forces other than earthly are being brought to bear on him. It is partly to the style and manner of his life that he owes this. He is brought more into the presence of nature than his neighbour of the plains; he becomes imbued with the spirit of his surroundings; the deep dark gloom of the woods, the lonesomeness of the mountain solitudes, the voices of the storm and of the torrent, and of their reproductions in the echoes, appeal to him; and a poetical imagination begotten of such an existence finishes the process. Thus the roar of a waterfall in its dark chasm becomes to him the howlings of some demon prisoned among the rocks; the sighing of the wind through the forest trees is caused by the passage of spirits; the mists that furl around the mountain peaks and are wafted so silently across crest and corrie are disembodied ghosts; and the sounds that break the stillness of the night are the shrieks and yells of fiends and their victims.

This brings me to my story. I fancy that most of my readers are acquainted more or less with the scenery of the Highlands; but in the case of by far the larger number of them, I venture to say that such acquaintance extends only to the Highlands in their summer or their autumn dress. If so, they only half know them. Brave is the tourist who ventures amid the bens and glens when rude King Boreas lords it over them; when winter's wind roars adown the gorges of the hill, staggering the stalwart pines, mingling the withered leaves and the snowflakes in the desolate woods. When icicles hang from the hoary rocks, and the deep drift chokes up the ravines, mantles the slopes of the corries, and bends in cornices over the threatening cliffs; when the river roars through the plain—brown and swollen—and its parent torrents are leaping and raving among the boulders; when the mountain hare and the ptarmigan are white as the snow that harbours them; and the deer, driven from the hills by stress of weather, roam in herds through the low-lying woods; and the mountain fox leaves his cairn and prowls around the farm and the sheepfold—*then*, if you would enter into the spirit of loneliness and solitude, take your way to the Highlands. Do not imagine, however, that such is their condition during the whole of winter; on the contrary, I have painted a particularly black picture, and it was in very much better weather that, two or three years ago, I went north, in December, on a visit to some friends in Inverness-shire. The particular part of the county I stayed in does not materially affect my adventure, so I shall not disclose it.

My time sped by very pleasantly, although the district did not afford many neighbours at short distances; but this was a circumstance that always procured me an extra hearty welcome when I ventured far enough from home to call upon any people. On one of these expeditions I had ridden to a house about eight miles away, and the late hour of my arrival brought about an invitation to stay for dinner and spend the evening. My friends pushed their hospitality to such an extent, that they had almost prevailed upon me to stay the night as well, when a good-natured challenge changed my wavering plans

into a firm determination to be off. Our conversation after dinner had not unnaturally turned upon ghost-stories, as the district was an out-of-the-way one, and the country-folk were fully persuaded of the existence of kelpies and warlocks of various kinds. What now happened was that some of the young people fancied they had found the reason why I was willing to stay all night, and boldly told me that I was frightened to cross a certain bridge on my way home that had the reputation of being haunted. I knew the spot well, though I had never found out its exact story; and when I had assured the country-people that I had no fears of the experiment, they solemnly shook their heads, and averred that not for sums untold would they cross the bridge after nightfall. On the present occasion, as I had been foremost among the sceptics during the story-telling, I felt my reputation at stake; and declaring I would on no account remain, I gave orders to have my pony brought round. The whole party came to the door to see me start—the elders inveighing against my foolishness in setting off at that time of night; the young people plying me with horrors, and telling me to be sure to come round next morning—if alive—and give an account of my adventures. To all I gave a merry reply, and lighting my pipe, swinging myself into the saddle, and shouting 'Good-night,' I cantered off down the avenue.

For a couple of miles the road led me down a deep wooded glen. On both sides the mountains towered aloft to a height of more than two thousand feet, their lower slopes thickly clad with pine and birch, their shoulders and summits white from a recent heavy snowfall. The river poured along tumultuously, close beneath the road, swirling past frowning cliffs of rock, brawling and battling with heaps of boulders, shooting in sheets of glancing foam over cascade and rapid. By daylight the scene was sufficiently grand and impressive; illumined as it now was by a faint moonlight, it was much more so. The night was calm and slightly frosty; but overhead, a strong breeze was blowing, and from time to time the moon was obscured by the flying clouds. The play of light and shade brought about by this was very beautiful; at one moment the shaggy hillsides and deep pools of the river were plunged in deepest shadow; in the next a flood of pale glory poured over them, painting the rushing stream with silver, shooting shafts of light among the tall trees, tracing mosaics on the dark surface of the road. Each clump of ferns, each bush and stump, took uncommon shape, and it required no great stretch of imagination to convert the boulders and reefs of rock out in the stream into waterbells and kelpies. The rush and roar of the river drowned all other sounds; but with the exception of the echoing tread of my pony and the occasional bark of a fox from the hill, there was nothing else to be heard. On my way down the glen I passed a few scattered cottages, but their occupants were long ago in bed, although it was not much past ten o'clock.

The wilder part of the glen ended in a fine pass, where the hills towered almost straight up from the river, and the pines threw so deep a shadow, that for a few yards it was impossible

to see the road. Just beyond, the mountains retreated to right and left, and through a short and level tract of meadow-land, road and stream made their way down to the shores of the loch. Ahead of me I could see its broad bosom glancing in the moonlight, and the great snow-clad mountains beyond it. As the improved condition of the road now made rapid progression easier, I gave the pony his head, and he went along in a style that promised soon to land me at my destination.

There was only one thing that troubled me—the haunted bridge. Once past it, and I should thoroughly enjoy my moonlight ride. I do not know whether it was the thought of the ghost-stories with which we had beguiled the hours after dinner, and which now kept recurring to my mind in spite of all effort to the contrary, or whether it was the solemn and impressive scenery I had passed through in the glen, that had unstrung me; but the nearer I drew to the bridge the more uncomfortable I felt regarding it. It was not exactly fear, but a vague presentiment of evil—the Highland blood asserting itself. I could not get rid of the sensation. I tried to hum and to whistle, but the forced merriment soon died a natural death. I was now on the loneliest part of the road. From the bottom of the glen as far as the bridge—about three miles—there was not a single cottage; and more than a mile on the other side of it lay a scattered hamlet. The moon, too, which had hitherto befriended me, now threatened to withdraw its light; and where clumps of trees overhung the road the darkness was deep. The pony carried me along bravely—he knew he was going home; and in a short time a turn in the road showed me, some distance ahead, a ribbon of white high upon the dark hillside. It was the stream that ran beneath the fatal bridge.

Better get out of this as soon as possible, I thought; and with voice and stick I encouraged the pony to increased speed. On we went! The roar of the haunted stream was loud and near now; the gloom increased as we plunged deeper into the wood that filled its basin; in another minute the bridge would be far behind, when, without the least warning, the pony shied to one side and then stood stock still, quivering all over. The shock all but sent me flying over its head; but by an effort I kept my seat. I had not far to look for the cause of the beast's fright. Not a dozen yards away were the dimly seen parapets of the bridge; and on one of them crouched an object that froze me with terror. There are some moments in which the events of a lifetime pass in review; there are some glances in which an infinity of detail can be taken in quicker than eye can close. This was one of them. I do not suppose that my eye rested on the object of my terror for more than a second; but in that brief space I saw what seemed like the upper part of a distorted human body, hunchbacked and without legs, with a face that glowed with the red light of fire! I can laugh now, when I think of my fright; but at the moment, I remember getting the pony into motion somehow with stick, bridle, and voice, and speeding across the bridge like a thunderbolt, crouching down, Tam o' Shanter-

like, and momentarily expecting to feel the grip of a clammy hand on my neck! Hard, hard we galloped through the hamlet I have mentioned; nor did I slacken the pace until the lights of my abode had gleamed through the plantation, and we were safe and sound in the stable-yard.

To make a really good ghost-story, my narrative should go no further; but the sequel has still to be told. I invented an excuse to appease the curiosity of my friends, who naturally were anxious to know what had sent us home in such a fashion—the pony in a lather, and myself with a scared, unintelligible expression. I did not want to tell the real story until I had made some effort to unravel it. With this end in view, I started on foot soon after breakfast for the house I had dined at, intending to make a thorough examination of the bridge and the course of the stream on my way, and to question some of the cottagers in the hamlet. I was saved the trouble, however. I had not gone much more than a mile, when I perceived coming along the road towards me a sturdy pedlar, with a fur cap on his head, and a pack of very large dimensions fastened on his broad shoulders. Such fellows are very commonly met with in the outlying districts of the Highlands, where they do a roaring trade in ribbons, sham jewellery, and smallwares, besides carrying a fund of gossip from place to place. In the specimen of the class now before me I was not long in recognising the ghost of the haunted bridge, and in hailing him I was soon in possession of the whole story. 'Yes; he was the man that was sitting on the brig about eleven o'clock; and was I the gentleman that rode past as if all the witches in the country-side were at his heels? Faith, it was a proper fright I had given him.'

'But tell me,' I asked, 'what on earth were you doing there at such a time of night?'

'Weel, sir, I was very late of gettin' across the ferry; and it was a langer step than I had thocht doon to the village; and I had had a guid walk the day already, and was tired-like. The brig was kind o' handy for a rest; so I just sat doon on the dike and had a bit smoke o' the pipe. Losh, sir, when ye cam scourin' past, I thocht it was the deil himsel'; but then I just thocht that it was mysel' sitting in the shadow that had frightened your beastie, and it had run awa' wi' you like. And when I cam the length o' the village, I just had to creep into a bit shed; and wi' my pack and some straw I soon made a bed.'

So here was the whole story. The deep shadow on the bridge had prevented me from seeing the sitter's legs; the heavy knapsack had given him a humpback; the fur cap and the glow of the pipe accounted for the fiery countenance. With mutual explanations we parted—he to push his sales in the villages beyond; I, to hurry on to the house in the glen, whose inmates at first evinced the liveliest interest in the over-night episode—an interest, however, which waned to disappointment as I proceeded to explain how the ghost was laid. I may mention that I omitted the 'scourin' past' portion of the adventure. How they will chaff me when they read this!

FAIRYLAND IN MIDSUMMER.

SHALL I tell you how one day
Into Fairyland we went?
Fairy folk were all about,
Filling us with glad content;
For we came as worshippers
Into Nature's temple grand,
And the fairies welcome such
With the freedom of the land.

Through the green-roofed aisles we went,
Passing with a careful tread,
For beside our happy feet
Purple orchis raised its head;
And behind, the blue-bells hung,
Fading now like ghosts at morn,
Here and there a white one bent,
Like a 'maiden all forlorn.'

From the bank across our way
Ragged Robin flaunted red,
And athwart a narrow trench
Feathery ferns their shadows spread.
Fair white campion from the hedge
Raised its starry petals chaste,
And the fragile speedwell blue
Bade us on our journey haste.

Haste? For why? We sought the pool
Where the water-lilies bloom,
And we found it ere the night,
Hidden in a leafy gloom;
All around like sentinels
Yellow iris stood on guard,
Keeping o'er the virgin queens
Ever faithful watch and ward.

Like pale queens the lilies white
On their leafy couches lay,
Where no wanton hand could reach,
No disloyal foot could stray.
Lovingly we bade adieu
To each golden-hearted queen,
And stepped out to where the heath
Laughed to heaven in robe of green.

Here we gathered treasure-trove—
Eyebright, milkwort, cuckoo-shoes—
Till our baskets, overfull,
Many a precious bud must lose;
Till the sunset glory fell
On the blossoms in our hand,
And, with lingering glances, we
Bade farewell to Fairyland.

FLORENCE TYLER.

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